



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2006

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At long last, *The Migrant* will be available in digital form. The process of distributing CD's with the entire collection of the TOS journal will begin soon. Thanks to all who have worked so hard to make this possible. Many people have been involved in this undertaking; however, Mike Roedel and the members of the Publication Committee deserve special acknowledgement. Be sure to get your copy!

The Conservation Policy Committee has also been doing an excellent job, keeping us informed about state and federal legislation regarding conservation issues relevant to the mission of TOS. As one of the longest-standing conservation groups in the state, our recommendations are important. There is strength in numbers and we believe that a TOS endorsement of legislation has influence. I want to encourage Chapters as well as individuals to send letters of support when you believe strongly in an issue. Much of the support for Conservation issues depends on educating our elected officials about the potential impact of their decisions. It is important to make your voice heard!

Plan to attend the Spring Meeting in Nashville May 6 – 9. Details are available in this issue of *The Warbler* and on the TOS website. Several members from Chattanooga had the opportunity to hear Bobby Harrison, guest speaker for the Spring Meeting, at Southern Adventist University during the fall. He will cover the history of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker as well as update you on the most current information from the swamps of Arkansas. You don't want to miss him!

Enjoy the Spring migration and I hope to see you in Nashville.

Danny Gaddy

2006 TOS SPRING MEETING

Nashville, Tennessee

May 5, 6, 7, 2006

The Nashville Chapter extends an invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the TOS Spring Meeting, to be held May 5, 6, 7, 2006. We welcome you to Music City to enjoy the Sights and Sounds of Spring.

The meeting will be headquartered at the Steeplechase Inn located at 5581 Franklin Pike Circle in Brentwood TN, off I-65 at Exit 74-A. The hotel is holding rooms for TOS members through April 10, 2006. Mention your TOS membership for the special rate of \$55.00, plus tax, per night for a room or \$75.99, plus tax, for a suite (the suite has a separate bedroom and a living room with a sleeper sofa, great bargain for a small group of friends or two couples). Also included is a Deluxe Complimentary Breakfast. Members are encouraged to make reservations well in advance.

Alternate lodging choices at Exit 74-A include: Holiday Inn 615-373-2600, Comfort Inn 615-221-5001, and Hampton Inn 615-373-2212.

Registration will be held Friday evening, May 5, from 5:30-8:30 P.M. in Suite 401 at the Steeplechase Inn and from 6:30-7:00 A.M. on Saturday. Field trips will depart from the Steeplechase Inn parking lot on Saturday and Sunday mornings at 7:00.

The TOS Board Meeting and the Saturday evening banquet will take place at the Ed Jones Auditorium, Ellington Agricultural Center, just a few miles from the hotel.

The registration fee for the weekend event will be \$20.00. The Saturday evening buffet supper will include barbeque pork and chicken, cost will be \$15.00 per person. Please notify Amy Potter (see below) if you are interested in a vegetarian option. Registration and dinner payments must be received by April 15. Send checks to: Amy Potter, 616 Indian Ridge Drive, Nashville, TN, 37221.

Our speaker will be award-winning nature photographer, speaker, writer, and educator Bobby Harrison. Currently he is associate professor and director of the Art Program at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. His articles and photographs have appeared in many calendars and magazines. Since February 2004 Mr. Harrison has been engaged in the on-going Ivory-billed Woodpecker research project in eastern Arkansas.

Field trips Saturday will include the locales you have grown to know and love in the Nashville area such as Radnor Lake State Natural Area, Shelby Bottoms and Beaman Park, a new 1,200 acre Metro/Davidson County park. Sunday will provide an opportunity to check these areas again, and explore others.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Nashville in the Spring.

Susan Hollyday, President,
Nashville Chapter TOS.

The “Digital Migrant” Archives to be Available April 1, 2006

The Migrant, a journal devoted to Tennessee birds, has been published by Tennessee Ornithological Society in paper form since 1930. The back issues of *The Migrant* are now available in digital format on CD.

The CD contains approximately 300 issues of *The Migrant* spanning 75 years (1930-2004). All issues are in the popular Portable Document Format (PDF) which is readable and fully searchable using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader. The most recent copy of that software package is included on the CD and is easily installed on your computer if you don't already have it.

This CD puts much of the important and interesting information compiled by TOS over the decades at your fingertips in a user-friendly format. Each issue is individually searchable using the Adobe Acrobat Reader's search engine. Desktop search software is also available (without cost) through Google.com. Installation of the Google software will index every word contained in the entire collection, so issues may be easily and quickly searched using the key words or names that you may wish to find. Results are shown in order of relevance to the search. With a simple click on the link, the file is opened to the page you searched for.

This project was carried out using a private contractor to scan and process each issue of the journal. The newly-formed TOS Publications Committee (Wallace Coffey, Theresa Graham, Dan Mooney, Chuck Nicholson, Michael Roedel (chair), and Chris Welsh) was requested by the membership at the Spring 2005 TOS meeting to revisit this long-needed project. Over the past year they have moved it to completion.

The CD will be available at the Spring TOS meeting in Nashville, or may be ordered for delivery by mail after April 1, 2006. By mail, each CD is \$5.00 for members, or \$55.00 for non-members postage paid. At a state meeting the cost is \$2.50 for members and \$50.00 for non-members. When ordering by mail, checks should be made out to Tennessee Ornithological Society and should be sent to: Mac McWhirter, TOS Treasurer, PO Box 22682, Memphis, TN 38122.

Michael Roedel, Wildlife Biologist

Post Office Box 611, Cerrillos, NM 87010

Phone (505) 438-3736

2ravens@cybermesa.com

TOS CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Tennessee Teaming with Wildlife Coalition

TOS has joined the Tennessee Teaming with Wildlife Coalition that has been organized by TWRA. We were among 53 organizations/individuals statewide who added their organization's name to the congressional letters that TWRA carried to Congress last month, asking for their support for increased funding for wildlife through the State Wildlife Grants program. This is an important way to increase the power of the requests that we bring to congress. Several individual TOS Chapters also signed on to the Coalition include: Nashville, Lee & Lois Herndon Chapter, and Knoxville.

TOS also joined the other members of the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition who signed on to an effort of the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies to ensure that wildlife funding is included in any potential climate change legislation. This effort is being supported by organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Management Institute, Izaak Walton League, American Fisheries Society, The Wildlife Society, and others.

Bald Eagle Delisting

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services has re-opened the public comment period on its original 1999 proposal to remove the Bald Eagle from the list of threatened and endangered species (it has been listed as threatened since 1995). Comments will also be accepted on the draft voluntary National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines as well as the proposed definition of term "disturb". More information is at <<http://www.fws.gov/>>. Comments must be received by May 17, 2006. This notice will be published in the Federal Register.

If the Bald Eagle is delisted from the Endangered Species Act, they will continue to be protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Both acts protect bald eagles by prohibiting killing, selling or otherwise harming eagles, their nests or eggs. The draft voluntary National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines are not Federal regulations. They are intended to provide information for people who engage in recreation or land use activities on how to avoid impacts to eagles prohibited by these two Federal laws.

The guidelines are crafted to reflect the current way that Federal and State managers interpret BGEPA and MBTA. For example, the guidelines recommend buffers around nests when conducting activities that are likely to disturb bald eagles. These areas serve to screen nesting eagles from noise and visual distractions caused by human activities.

The Service is also proposing a regulation to clarify the term "disturb" under BGEPA that is consistent with existing Federal and State interpretation. Under the clarification, "disturb" would be defined as actions that disrupt the breeding, feeding or sheltering practices of an eagle, causing injury, death or nest abandonment. This is the standard the Service has used informally over the years and how states have interpreted the statute. The proposed regulation defining "disturb" would codify it. This definition will provide clarity to the public while continuing protection for bald eagles, which will help ensure an almost seamless transition from ESA listing to delisting.

The bald eagle once ranged throughout every state in the Union except Hawaii. By 1963, only 417 nesting pairs were found in the lower 48. Since the delisting proposal in 1999, recovery of the bald eagle has continued to progress at an impressive rate. In 2000, the last year a national bald eagle census was conducted, there were an estimated 6471 nesting pairs of bald eagles.

Bob Hatcher is researching this issue and will be preparing comments for the Conservation Policy Committee to review and send on to the TOS Executive Committee for approval.

Melinda Welton
TOS Conservation Policy Committee Chair

Michael Rodel Leaves Position as State Ornithologist

Michael Roedel has returned to Santa Fe, New Mexico after serving for two years as TWRA State Ornithologist. Michael followed his wife back to the "Land of Enchantment" after she accepted a position that both agreed she couldn't turn down.

Michael first moved to Nashville in 1995 to work on bird conservation issues at Tennessee Conservation League. He joined the Nashville Chapter of TOS at that time and has been a member ever since. Prior to accepting the TWRA position in January 2004, he had worked with The Nature Conservancy and with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Michael plans to continue his work with avian conservation issues in the southwest and will be dropping in on Nashville for occasional visits in the future.

The TWRA Ornithologist, Scott Somershoe

Dear all,

I was again invited by TWRA to participate in the interviews for the state ornithologist position and I am very pleased with the selection of Scott Somershoe.

Scott has been working as an avian ecologist with Dr. Dan Twedt at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Vicksburg, MS. Most recently he worked on projects to assess breeding and wintering bird distribution, demography, and habitat use in forests and wetlands in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Specific projects included the effects of silviculture treatments on bird populations in bottomland hardwoods of Louisiana, combining breeding bird survey and distance sampling to estimate density of migrant and breeding birds, and evaluating the Wetland Reserve Program as it relates to breeding bird density. His Master's Degree is from Georgia Southern University and his thesis was on habitat use by Neotropical migrants in oak hammocks in coastal Georgia. Scott has used a range of census and monitoring techniques including point counts, line transects, spot-mapping, nest searching, and was responsible for managing two bird banding stations for most of a year in Alabama.

I believe that Scott is a quick study and will soon be familiar with Tennessee's birds and important habitats. You'll all get a chance to meet him at the Spring TOS meeting in Nashville.

Melinda Welton
Conservation Policy Committee Chair

Volunteer Opportunity

Skilled birder needed to conduct a Breeding Bird Census count for the Cherokee National Forest in summer 2006. The volunteer would conduct 8-10 counts using the spot mapping method in a permanent plot located in a high elevation red spruce forest on Unaka Mountain, Unicoi County, TN during the months of May, June and July. The volunteer should be able to identify birds of red spruce-northern hardwood forest by sight AND sound; be able to use a compass and estimate distances; and to apply principles of personal safety working alone or in a small group. The National Forest will reimburse the volunteer for personal vehicle mileage (travel to and from your home in an adjacent city or town) and a standard per diem to compensate for meals.

For more information, contact Laura Lewis, lauralewis@fs.fed.us or (423) 476-9752.

2006 Inland Bird Banding Association Conference in Tellico Plains, TN

On September 22-24 Tennessee will be hosting the 2006 Inland Bird Banding Associations Annual Conference in Tellico Plains, Monroe Co. TN. Activities will include field trips to Whigg Meadow Bird Banding Station in Cherokee National Forest, a paper session, business meetings and a Saturday evening banquet featuring speaker and bander Bob Sargent. This will be the first time for the state to host this group which includes banders from across the inland US and Canada. For more information or, to volunteer to help with registration, hospitality or field trips, contact David Vogt at: dfv@tnaqua.org or 423/785-4036.

Dave Vogt

CHAPTER NEWS

The **Lee & Lois Herndon Chapter** held its two annual Christmas Bird Counts in Elizabethton and Roan Mountain on Dec. 17 and Dec. 18, respectively.

The Elizabethton CBC missed matching the all-time high of 79 species by only a single species.

The total of 78 species found on the Elizabethton CBC, which was the 63rd consecutive CBC, included such exceptional finds as Barn Owl, Ruddy Duck, Northern Bobwhite, Double-crested Cormorant, Loggerhead Shrike, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Chipping Sparrow and Purple Finch.

The Barn Owl was the first of its species found on an Elizabethton CBC since 1969. One count week species — a Rufous Hummingbird — had vanished a few days prior to the count, but returned three days after the count. The Rufous Hummingbird was observed at the feeder maintained by chapter members Gary and Brenda Wallace. Bob and Martha Sargent of the Hummer Bird Study Group banded this hummingbird Nov. 9, 2005. The Sargents also banded a Rufous Hummingbird at a feeder maintained by Glen Eller, a member of the chapter who resides in Galax, VA

The Roan Mountain CBC, which was the 53rd count in 56 years, yielded a total of 48 species. Notable finds included American Black Duck, Gray Catbird and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Chapter officers are: Tom McNeil, president; Don Holt, vice president; Dianne Draper, secretary; and Gilbert Derouen, treasurer. The chapter's newsletter, *The Kestrel*, is edited by Bryan Stevens. Rick Knight serves the chapter as statistician and Frank Ward as historian.

Bryan Stevens



The chapter also participated in the annual Winterfest Christmas Tree Exhibit at Sycamore Shoals State Park, Elizabethton, by decorating a tree with bird-themed decorations.

Kneeling are: Dianne Draper, Don Holt and Brookie Potter. Standing are: JoAnn Alsop, David Thometz, Bryan Stevens, Reece Jamerson, Jacqui Hinshaw and Gilbert Derouen.

CHAPTER NEWS

Memphis Chapter - Western species observed in the Memphis area during an unusually dry winter season include Inca Dove (Dec. 5), Golden-crowned (Dec. 4 - Jan.) and Harris's Sparrow (Jan. 5 - Feb.), and three Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks (Memphis CBC Dec. 18). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a Gray Catbird were also recorded on December 18, 2005.

On November 12 and 13, the Memphis Chapter had a field trip to Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge near Starkville, MS. Notable sightings included Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pine Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, several thousand Double-crested Cormorants, a family of Bald Eagles (2 mature and 2 first year), Great Egret, Wilson's Snipe, and one alligator. Members watched a pair of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers return to a nest cluster about an hour before sundown. Each bird pecked pieces of bark off several pine trees and called repeatedly for about 10 minutes before suddenly darting into its respective roost hole on a nearby tree for the night. Several TOS members watched the birds emerge from their roost holes just after sunrise the next morning. Once common in the southeastern U.S., Red-cockaded Woodpeckers nest only in mature pine forests. Habitat loss has reduced the range of this endangered species. Noxubee NWR is an excellent place to see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and many members felt that this trip provided the best views they had ever had of the species. Nest and roost cavities are typically located close together in an area called a cluster. A family group of 3 to 4 individuals occupy the cluster. First year males help the breeding female with incubation and feeding. Resin wells are drilled below the tree cavities. The resulting sticky layer of pine pitch protects the birds from predation by snakes. Members scouted the woodpecker trail early in the day to locate trees with fresh pitch and watched for woodpeckers to return to those trees in late afternoon. With a modern Visitors Center, boardwalks, covered viewing platforms, picnic grounds, and several short trails, the Noxubee NWR has unusually nice facilities. The Friends of Noxubee organization mans the Visitor Center on Saturday and Sunday. Friends Margaret Copeland and Lawrence Croft helped us have a very successful visit.

On February 4, 2006, MTOS had a field trip to Reelfoot State Park and National Wildlife Refuge. Members

watched a Bald Eagle pair trading off duties incubating eggs and adding sticks to their nest. Another 7 Bald Eagles were seen. Loggerhead shrikes (3), and large numbers of Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese were also seen. Remarkably, no Canada Geese were seen. That evening, Knox Martin presented a program on raptors at the Air Park Inn.

The Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, site of the reported Ivory-billed Woodpecker sightings is less than 100 miles from Memphis. On April 2, Van Harris will lead an MTOS field trip to the Cache River NWR near Brinkley Arkansas.

Margaret Jefferson

In Memory

*Ann Houk, Nashville Chapter
Died November 07, 2005*

*Barbara Hardin, Memphis Chapter
Died November 13, 2005*

*Kenneth Walkup, Nashville Chapter
Died November 19, 2005*



June 30th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

Theresa Graham, Editor
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060
(901) 465-4263 (home)
(901) 748-9324 (fax)
e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net

CHAPTER NEWS

In November **Nashville Chapter** TOS members braved clear but cold weather for a field trip to **Pace Point/Britton Ford**. We joined Mike Todd and folks from the Wariota Audubon Society for a productive and fun birding day. Highlights included a very late American Golden Plover and a Pacific Loon.

In December a small group spent a half-day at **Old Hickory Lake**. We had the fourth area record of a Ross' Goose, hundreds of roosting Black Vultures, and 50+ Great Blue Herons below Old Hickory Dam. Several members then headed south to **Lincoln County** to view the Black-throated Sparrow and the **Winchester** Whooping Cranes.

Wheeler NWR provided an excellent trip in January. Eighty-three species were seen, members who had not been to the refuge were impressed by the amazing bird life and habitat.

The Nashville CBC was held on December 17, with 32 observers and 2 feeder watchers. Total species was 83, about average for the count. The Hickory-Priest CBC on January 1 tallied 91 species. This is slightly above average for the count. Sixteen folks participated.

During our monthly meetings we have learned about the inner workings of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency from Gary Myers, particularly TWRA's participation in national and international birding programs. Mike Carlton discussed the state of our state parks, with emphasis on habitat and birding. In January Daniel Moss revealed the results of bird studies being conducted on the huge expanses of open space at Fort Campbell in north-central Tennessee. Charlie Muise made us more aware of the work being done at the Tremont center in the Smokies with a fine program in February.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Spring Meeting.

Susan Hollyday

Stephen M. Russell Chapter - The Bristol Bird Club (BBC) enjoyed another active winter season.

Recent Activities:

The Bristol Bird Club had a great Christmas Party at the home of member, Mike Poe. Once again, the members shared in a feast of goodies prepared in the holiday spirit. Wallace Coffey recognized the outstanding birds of the year and presented club awards. Birders, young and old, greeted Santa and he shared gifts to all young birders without discrimination due to age.

Mary Evans, 62, of Kingsport, TN, died peacefully Thursday night (Dec. 22, 2005) at her home in the presence of her family. She was a lifelong resident of Kingsport. She enjoyed hiking, camping, bird watching, wild flowers and was an all-around talented naturalist. Mary will be missed by her friends in the Bristol Bird Club where she and her husband, Mike, have been members since 1992. Mary attended several TOS annual meetings and winter field trips to Reelfoot, as well as our BBC field trips and meetings.

The lakes in Upper East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia have been home to a variety of waterfowl during the winter months. There has been much activity at several heron rookeries in the area, including one nest that has been usurped by a Great Horned Owl. For the second year, Bald Eagles are nesting on the Holston River at Holston Army Ammunition Plant which is just west of the Hawkins/Sullivan county line.

Upcoming Activities:

April – Standifer Gap Marsh, Chattanooga, TN

May – Natural Tunnel State Park Birding Weekend (IMBD Event), Duffield, Virginia

June – Whitetop Mountain, Grayson County, Virginia

Bill Grigsby

In Memory of Linda Northrop (1930-2006)

The Greeneville Chapter is deeply saddened to announce the passing of Linda Northrop, who died January 7, 2006.

Linda became a member of our chapter after she and husband Roy moved to Greene County in 1984. In her 20+ years here, she birded and encouraged others to bird not merely in Greene County, but all over the world. In addition to birding over much of the United States, Linda also logged significant field time in Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Trinidad. At her passing, her North American list stood at over 720.

While in Greene County, Linda became an active member of TOS, attending meetings regularly and becoming a director for the Greeneville Chapter. At these meetings, she met many Tennessee birders and made many friends. She also built a solid Tennessee life list by birding around the state at meetings. This was important to her, as she had come to see Tennessee as her home for the rest of her life, and she wanted to find as many birds here as possible.

For about fifteen years, Linda and Roy lived in the Mosheim community of Greene County. Each year, after fall migration, she and Roy migrated south to spend the winter in warmer climes. They also owned property in the Rio Grande area of south Texas. Over a period of many years, they lived at two locations there, first in Salineno, then in Mission. Linda was a regular participant in Christmas Bird Counts in south Texas for over a decade. During this time, she and Roy played host to many birders from Tennessee and elsewhere, openly sharing their home, their hearts, and their knowledge of birds in the Rio Grande Valley and nearby areas. Quite a few birders from Tennessee and around the United States fattened their life lists in Texas as a result of Linda's generosity.

In 1998, Roy and Linda sold their home in Mosheim and moved to Tusculum, on the outskirts of Greeneville. Linda continued to bird actively, although Roy's increasing health concerns limited her time in the field. For the first time, she was able to participate in Greeneville Christmas Bird Counts, and she was a regular part of monthly chapter outings.

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE

Data for the recent 2005/2006 Christmas Bird Count season is due. All Tennessee bird counts should have the following data included with the bird statistics:

1. Miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.) for each party.
2. Miles and hours for each night-birding (owling) party are kept separately.
3. Feeder-watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder-watchers.
4. All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.
5. Please include the starting and ending times of the count.
6. Please include the number of observers, number of field parties, and names of all observers. For example, one person in a car is one observer in one party; 4 people in another car are 4 observers in one party; this example results in 5 observers in 2 parties.
7. Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716. Email is acceptable at aves7000@bellsouth.net. I would like to have the data sometime in the first month after the count. This allows timely reporting to *The Migrant* editor.

Thanks for your efforts to continue monitoring Tennessee's birdlife. Your time and skills are very much appreciated.

Ron Hoff, TOS state count compiler

Inca Doves in Tennessee

Inca Doves were long overdue to appear within TN state lines as they have been spreading eastward and recently bred in AR and MS. Jeff Wilson found a single bird in Ensley Bottoms on May 4, 2005.

Theresa Graham, editor of *The Tennessee Warbler* hosted a single Inca Dove at her feeder in Oakland TN, in Fayette Co, just east of Memphis. The bird was present between Nov. 24 - Dec. 6, 2005.

The small size, long tail and scaly back pretty much tell the story on ID.



REGISTRATION FORM - TOS SPRING MEETING MAY 5, 6, & 7, 2006

Name(s) _____

Address _____

TOS Chapter: _____

\$_____ for _____ Registrations @ \$20each

\$_____ for _____ Dinner Reservations @ \$15 each

\$_____ Total amount enclosed. Make Check payable to Nashville TOS

Vegetarian Meal? Yes ☐ No ☐

Mail registration form and check to:

Amy Potter
616 Indian Ridge Drive
Nashville, TN 37221

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